



U.S. Department of Justice

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WOMAN SENTENCED FOR IDENTITY THEFT CHARGES

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – SHARON BELLE, of 8 Kerr Way, Roxbury, Massachusetts, was sentenced by the United States District Court in Concord to 57 months in federal prison following her conviction on a three-count information for identity theft crimes and bank fraud. Belle pleaded guilty to the charges on October 11, 2005.

Belle, 38, pleaded guilty to an information that charged her, in the first and second counts, with fraudulently using eight different peoples' names to pass a series of counterfeit checks between February 2001 and June 2005. The second count charged Belle with aggravated identity theft for using the identity information of another person in the course of the fraud.

The apprehension and prosecution of Belle were the result of an investigation brought to, and then coordinated through, the Identity Theft and Fraud Working Group organized in the U.S. Attorney's Office, which brings together both federal and state law enforcement agencies to combat identity theft and fraud. An intensive and coordinated investigation by agents of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Massachusetts State Police, ultimately resulted in Belle's apprehension and prosecution.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono highly commended the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Massachusetts State Police, stating "The joint efforts and outstanding cooperation of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Massachusetts State Police that permitted the government to unravel the facts of and successfully prosecute this case stands as a fine example of law enforcement work and professionalism at its best. This should serve as a warning to anyone contemplating identity fraud that they will be detected, apprehended, and prosecuted."

Assistant U. S. Attorney Alfred Rubega prosecuted this case.